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Encyclopedia of Southern Culture, by Charles Reagan Wilson and William Ferris

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degree of insight and energy that he brings to his other analyses. Moreover, there is a way in which these stories undercut Carnes's more explicit interpretation: the meaning of initiation, these vignettes suggest, was less resistance, accommodation, and reidentification than perspiration, concentration, and gratification.

Although elegantly drawn and theoretically rich, Carnes's depiction of the ritual as a male initiation ceremony raises as many issues as it resolves. One must wonder about the age of these initiates, about regional variations in membership, and about the meaning of initiation to members of the separate auxiliary female orders. Carnes also stints on the working-class character of some of these lodges, a fact that would seem to alter the central interpretation of the book: according to statistics in the book, 71 percent of the Odd Fellows in Detroit in 1871, 52 percent of the Knights of Pythias in Buffalo in 1894, and 61 percent of the Knights of Maccabee in Cleveland in 1900 were other than middle class (p. 172 n.). In addition, Carnes could have paid more attention to the conflict surrounding these secret rituals, not just from without but, as the author only passingly suggests, from within by those members who felt "that the emphasis on ritual deflected money, time, and effort away from tangible political or economic objectives" (p. 10). Finally, I should note that some readers will not be persuaded by a historical argument that hinges on the "psychological needs" (p. 156) of participants, especially where direct evidence such as diaries and letters is lacking.

All books generate questions about evidence and explanation. This one may generate more than the usual number, but it also contains a greater spirit of imagination and experimentation than most monographs. This well-written and suggestive work of cultural criticism is an important contribution to studies of ritual and gender in nineteenth-century America.

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CHARLES REAGAN WILSON and WILLIAM FERRIS, editors. *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*. Assisted by ANN J. ABADIE and MARY L. HART. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, for the Center for the Study of Southern Culture, University of Mississippi. 1989. Pp. xxi, 1634. $59.95.

This much-anticipated volume is a product of the highly regarded Center for the Study of Southern Culture at the University of Mississippi. Edited by folklorist William Ferris, the center's director, and historian Charles Reagan Wilson, the encyclopedia runs over sixteen hundred double-columned pages in length and contains over twelve hundred entries contributed by more than six hundred authors. As such, it is a monument to collaborative scholarly endeavor. This particular endeavor was apparently prompted by a fear that the "dramatic changes" that have transformed southern society since World War II might portend "the eventual end of a distinctive southern region" (p. xv). In the face of southern culture's possible demise, the editors' sought to "chart the South's cultural landscape" by collecting "authoritative, concise, thoughtful, substantive, and interesting articles" on the subject between the covers of a single volume, albeit a bulky one (p. xv).

Avowedly interdisciplinary in approach, the encyclopedia is divided into twenty-four sections, each devoted to a particular scholarly discipline or category of analysis. Some of these sections examine subjects traditionally associated with the study of culture, such as art and architecture, history, literature, music, and religion, but others examine subjects, such as the environment, the media, recreation, social class, and women's lives, whose significance to the study of culture has only recently gained the attention it deserves. Introduced by an interpretive essay written by an expert consultant picked by the editors, each section contains several dozen individual entries giving basic information about and brief analysis of a vast, and sometimes bewildering, array of themes, topics, and people.

Broad in its scope, the encyclopedia covers topics as esoteric as Gothic Revival architecture, as popular as stock-car racing, as controversial as Jerry Falwell, as inspirational as Martin Luther King, Jr., as misunderstood as the Gullah dialect, as serious as Calvinism, and as light-hearted as "The Beverly Hillbillies," with roughly equal facility. Indeed, the volume makes a concerted effort to examine popular culture as well as folk and high culture, and, although the effort produces some of the encyclopedia's most embarrassing moments, it also gives the work an entertaining quality that it would otherwise have lacked. Moreover, the encyclopedia also scrupulously avoids the common pitfall of treating "southern culture" as if it were synonymous with the culture of white southerners. The cultural contributions of black southerners in the areas of music, literature, religion, language, history, and politics are examined in healthy detail. The civil rights movement is as much a presence in this volume as the Civil War, and movement leaders such as King, Andrew Young, and Fannie Lou Hamer are given as much attention as prominent Confederates Jefferson Davis, Robert E. Lee, and Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson. Probably no single individual, white or black, casts as long a shadow over the volume as literary giant William Faulkner, but inquiries into southern culture have long been Faulkner-centered, if not Faulkner-haunted.

Taken as a whole, this encyclopedia is an impressive volume, clearly the result of arduous editorial labor and dedicated effort from an overwhelming majority of contributors. This was an ambitious undertaking, one almost daunting in its magnitude, but, as a collection of material and information pertaining to the South and to the culture of southerners, it holds together remarkably well. The introductory essays to the various sections are, without exception, ably done,

and some are noteworthy for their insight. Inevitably, the quality of the individual sketches varies significantly, but the editors have done an unusually good job of maintaining standards of competency. Occasionally (the entries of J. Mills Thornton III on Jacksonian democracy and Charles Joyner on creolization spring immediately to mind), the sketches are penetrating and thought-provoking.

There are, however, some striking anomalies in the decisions of the editors and consultants regarding what to include in the volume and what to leave out. All readers would likely concede that any one-volume encyclopedia of so broad a subject must of necessity be selective, but too often the selection process seems to have lacked a consistent rationale. Doubtless, specialists in different disciplines would draw up different lists of quirks and quibbles about the selection process, but to me the most glaring inconsistencies were evident in the comparatively short section on industry. Appropriately, this section includes a sketch on Delta Airlines, a major national air carrier whose corporate genealogy traces back to a crop-dusting operation in the Mississippi Delta. But there is no comparable treatment of North Carolina–based Piedmont Airlines, which evolved from a small regional company that ferried Piedmont-area businessmen from one city in their region to another into a profitable national carrier that enjoyed one of the best reputations for efficiency in the industry when it was taken over by USAir in 1989. Even more puzzling is this section's treatment of textiles, long the dominant industry in the South. The section includes an essay sketching the history of the industry as a whole, but, among the leading textile corporations, only J. P. Stevens and Company (recently taken over by West Point–Pepperell), an old-line New England company and arguably the least "southern" of the leading firms, is the subject of a separate entry. Despite their indigenous southern origins, neither Burlington Industries, the traditional industry leader, nor Springs Industries, with its colorful entrepreneurial history, receives as much attention as the northern interloper.

More troubling than inconsistencies in the selection process, however, is the editors' willingness to venture boldly onto the slippery slope of southern distinctiveness. Confessing a "special concern" that the volume identify "those aspects of southern life and thought . . . which have sustained either the reality or the illusion of regional distinctiveness," the editors "asked contributors to consider individual traits that are clearly unique to the region" based on their belief that the "*Encyclopedia*'s composite portrait of the South" would suggest "the fundamental uniqueness of southern culture" (p. xvi). Thus, the search for southern distinctiveness, momentarily explicit in the introduction, runs implicitly throughout the volume and emerges as its central theme. But, as is so often the case when the hoary question of southern exceptionalism arises, the issue is badly framed. The question is inherently a comparative one, and any study of southern culture, no matter how thorough, provides only part of the evidence needed for an informed comparison. Moreover, when overt comparisons are made in this volume, a region (the South) is often compared with a non-region (the rest of the United States), which is unlikely to have a distinct culture of its own but instead represents a congerie of the local, regional, ethnic, and class cultures that it encompasses. Some of the dangers inherent in such crude comparisons are exposed in the introductory essay to the recreation section, written by John Shelton Reed and Benjamin K. Hunnicutt and one of the few essays in the volume to address the distinctiveness question in rigorous fashion. At least with regard to recreation and leisure, Reed and Hunnicutt warn that "regional differences are not enormous" and that region "makes less difference than education" (p. 1209) and no more difference than ethnicity in explaining variations in recreational patterns. Nonetheless, despite their own caveats, Reed and Hunnicutt discern a distinctive southern leisure culture based on the preference of southerners, across all income groups, for recreation that is more "time intensive" and less "goods intensive" than that preferred by non-southerners. At first blush, this seems like a plausible cultural trait for a region where per capita income and average hourly wage rates (and hence disposable income and the opportunity cost of idle time) have been decidedly below national norms for many generations. But, on closer inspection, it appears probable that modern southerners spend proportionally less of their money on recreation and leisure because their comparatively impoverished economic environment has slowed the development of recreational goods and services (professional sports, for example) in the region. Southerners consume less during their leisure time than other Americans simply because there is less in the South to consume. Thus, distinctive southern leisure patterns appear a product not so much of longstanding or deeply ingrained cultural preferences as of the region's larger economic circumstances, which are, indeed, often measurably different from those in other parts of the United States.

In sum, as a compilation of information about the South and southerners, this volume stands, despite minor flaws, as a signal achievement, but, as an extended brief arguing the case for a distinctive southern culture, it can only provide raw evidence for future arguments.

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WILLIAM L. VANCE. *America's Rome.* Volume 1, *Classical Rome*; volume 2, *Catholic and Contemporary Rome.* New Haven: Yale University Press. 1989. Pp. xxiv, 454; xx, 498. $30.00 each volume.

Which of us might not have tried to dissuade an author from attempting such a work as this? To the explanation that it is an analysis of every sort of American